



Wildlife Rehabilitator Definitions and Requirements

Introduction

Licensed rehabilitators provide a valuable public service that State and Federal agencies cannot provide. The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife staff are trained and mandated to manage wildlife populations, not rear or care for individual animals. In order to ensure the safety of both the public and the animals, only persons who can demonstrate proper knowledge and ability to care for injured, orphaned or displaced wildlife, from intake to the point of the animal's release back into their natural habitat are, considered for licensing as wildlife rehabilitators. It is the Division's responsibility to administer the permit process and monitor the permit holders who rehabilitate wildlife.

1. Rehabilitator License

Required for the temporary holding, care and rehabilitation of native NJ game birds and/or mammals.

Requirements:

- One year minimum apprenticeship (see Apprenticeship definition below) with a NJ licensed rehabilitator which shall begin upon submission of the apprentice's name, address, telephone number, and start date by the sponsoring rehabilitator in writing to the Division or as listed on the rehabilitator's annual report when submitted to the Division prior to start of apprenticeship.
- One letter of recommendation from the sponsoring rehabilitator which details the understanding and proficiency of the apprentice in the following areas:
 - a) Code of ethics
 - b) State and Federal regulations pertaining to wildlife rehabilitation
 - c) Basic identification of common native wildlife species
 - d) Natural history and species specific behavior
 - e) Methods to prevent wildlife problems and humane solutions
 - f) Proper diet and nutrition (for those species trained for)
 - g) Safe capture and handling procedures (for those species trained for)
 - h) Ability to assess basic health problems (for those species trained for)
 - i) Basic first aid
 - j) Wildlife parasites, disease, including zoonoses
 - k) Euthanasia and disposal methods
 - l) Release criteria (for those species trained for)
 - m) Public contact

n) Record keeping

- Successful completion of the Division's questionnaire and/or application and/or test.
- Letter of commitment from a veterinarian willing to work with applying rehabilitator.
- Approval of an on-site inspection including proper caging and facility standards.
- Secure applicable permits from US Fish and Wildlife Service for avian species.
- Completion and submission of the Annual Report and Renewal Form along with required documentation.
- Participation and completion of a minimum of one (1) approved wildlife rehabilitation continuous education program each year.

2. Apprentice

A person working for, and under the direct supervision of a licensed rehabilitator, for the purpose of obtaining a rehabilitator's permit in their own name. An apprentice may be a sub-permittee (see Sub-permittee definition below).

Requirements:

- The sponsoring rehabilitator is required to have been licensed as a rehabilitator by the Division for at least two years prior to taking on an apprentice.
- The sponsoring rehabilitator must submit a letter stating the apprentices name, address, phone number and start date. This letter must be received within 30 days of the official start date.
- Apprenticeship shall be a minimum of one-year (12 consecutive months) and a minimum of 4 hours per week of active participation/training. This will allow the apprentice a working knowledge of the full cycle that takes place at a rehabilitation facility from infancy through to release, in addition to proper handling and care of injured adults that may arrive during the winter months.
- Training shall take place at the sponsoring rehabilitator's facility.
- Upon completion of the above requirements, an apprentice may apply for his or her own license by:
 - 1) Completing and submitting an application from the Division along with the require documentation.
 - 2) One letter of recommendation from the sponsoring rehabilitator which details the understanding and proficiency of the apprentice in the following areas:

- a) Code of ethics
 - b) State and Federal regulations pertaining to wildlife rehabilitation
 - c) Basic identification of common native wildlife species
 - d) Natural history and species specific behavior
 - e) Methods to prevent wildlife problems and humane solutions
 - f) Proper diet and nutrition (for those species trained for)
 - g) Safe capture and handling procedures (for those species trained for)
 - h) Ability to assess basic health problems (for those species trained for)
 - i) Basic first aid
 - j) Wildlife parasites, disease, including zoonoses
 - k) Euthanasia and disposal methods
 - l) Release criteria (for those species trained for)
 - m) Public contact
 - n) Record keeping
- 3) Successful completion of the Division's questionnaire and/or application and/or test.
 - 4) Letter of commitment from a veterinarian willing to work with applying rehabilitator.
 - 5) Approval of an on-site inspection including proper caging and facility standards.
 - 6) Secure applicable permits from US Fish and Wildlife Service for avian species.
 - 7) Completion and submission of the Annual Report and Renewal Form along with required documentation.
 - 8) Participation and completion of a minimum of one (1) approved wildlife rehabilitation continuous education program each year.

3. Sub-permittee

A volunteer working under the supervision of a licensed rehabilitator to provide *temporary*, off-site care for animals requiring constant, hourly medical care for a short period of time.

A Sub-permittee may be an Apprentice.

Requirements:

- (a) The sponsoring rehabilitator must submit a letter stating the sub-permittee's name, address, phone number and start date. This letter must be received within 30 days of the official start date.
- (b) The sub-permittee's name, address, phone number and start date must be listed on the rehabilitator's annual report.
- (c) When round-the clock intensive care is no longer needed, the animals must be returned to the facility where it was admitted. The licensed rehabilitator is responsible to oversee the final care and release of these animals.

- (d) The rehabilitator will be held responsible for the activities of the sub-permittees while functioning under their license.
- (e) **Sub-permittees are not permitted to operate their own facility.** All animals must be admitted at the facility of the licensed rehabilitator before going off-site with the sub-permittee.
- (f) All animals handled by the sub-permittee will be reported on the licensed rehabilitator's annual report to the Division.

4. General Licensing Requirements:

Permit Posted:

Once received, the wildlife rehabilitation permit shall be posted for the public.

Permit Expiration:

Wildlife Rehabilitation permits expire on December 31st of each year.

Handling Telephone Calls:

All licensed rehabilitators must maintain an appropriate telephone message answering system for handling and directing wildlife calls when they are not readily available to personally receive telephone inquires.

Facility Inspection

The Division may inspect any facility, site, and/or records during normal working hours.

Record Keeping

Wildlife rehabilitators are required to maintain records on each animal that is accepted for rehabilitation. Required information includes the date received name/address/phone number of person you receive the animal from, species, reason for admittance (injured, sick, orphaned), status and location of release, relocation and/or transfer. An initial exam and/or a medical sheet shall be maintained for each animal.

Renewals

All licenses are issued for one calendar year. If the following requirements are met, the Division **may** renew the permit.

- An annual report and renewal form must be completed and returned with required documents prior to due date each year.
- Attendance and/or participation in at least one continuing education program yearly (such as the NJWRA, IWRC, NWRA, NYSWRC or PWREC conferences, workshops, or other pre-approved educational programs. Documentation must be submitted when filing annual report.
- Permittee must be in good standing.

Species Covered by Your Permit

Each species a rehabilitator is permitted to handle shall be listed on their license.

Occasionally, a rehabilitator may receive an animal that is not listed on their permit. Rehabilitators are required to notify the Division at (609-292-2966) within 4 hours of taking possession and arrange to transport these animals to a rehabilitator licensed for that particular species as soon as reasonably possible. They may also discuss with the Division an alternative course of action and the Division may, upon review, allow the rehabilitator to provide care for that species.

Application for Additional Species

Application for the addition of new species to an existing license requires written request to the Division accompanied by proof of:

- Proper training and development of skills required to care for the species.
- Appropriate caging which meets the minimum standards to house the species.

Out-of-State Licensed Rehabilitators

Wildlife rehabilitators, who are licensed in another state and move into New Jersey, may be issued a license without the required apprenticeship period pending review of their application and qualifications by the Division.

Veterinarians

NJ licensed veterinarians may take temporary possession of wildlife and/or provide medical treatment of the wildlife while making arrangements to transfer the animals within 48 hours to a currently licensed wildlife rehabilitator licensed for that species. However, veterinarians are encouraged to discuss the payment of costs for such medical treatment prior to rendering any services.

Avian Species

Rehabilitators of avian species are required to apply for, obtain and forward a copy of a federal Migratory Bird Rehabilitation Permit. Contact the United States Fish and Wildlife – Migratory Bird permitting office at 413-253-8643 to obtain an application.

Other Permits

The issuance of a NJ Wildlife Rehabilitation permit is contingent upon compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations. Numerous local communities do not permit wildlife rehabilitation programs. All applicants should contact the local municipality regarding such regulations.

5. General Policy Information

Funding/Contributions/Donations

The Division does not provide funding for the rehabilitation program. Rehabilitation permit holders may solicit donations; however, such donations may not be required from individuals bringing wildlife to rehabilitators.

Mandatory donations are not permitted when accepting wildlife for Rehabilitation.

Facility Maintenance

Animals, facility (whether it is a separate building or in your home) and release sites should be maintained in a manner respectful of neighbors and in adherence with local, state and health ordinances. This includes:

- Arranging for separate indoor and outdoor facilities for wildlife facing away from people and pets.
- Control of noise levels, odors and proper sanitation procedures.
- Prior to change in facility location, the Division must be notified in order to inspect and approve the relocation. Significant changes to existing facilities and caging require documentation and approval by the Division.

Exploitation

The exploitation or presentation of any wildlife to the public in a manner that is unsafe or unprofessional is inappropriate and may be cause for re-evaluation or loss of your permit. Wildlife is not to be utilized, photographed or displayed in any manner which depicts them as pets or implies to the public that handling of wildlife in any unsafe manner is acceptable.

Minimum Standards

All rehabilitators are expected to follow the minimum standards guidelines as outlined in IWRC/NWRA Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation publication.

Non-Releasable Wildlife

In order to be considered releasable, wildlife must be capable of recognizing, obtaining and processing natural food; recognizing and evading or defending against predators; acquiring shelter, acquiring and defending territories; normal seasonal movements and dispersal; and normal socialization with conspecifics. Animals that cannot meet these basic release criteria, or cannot be returned to the wild because of physical or behavioral problems are to be euthanized.

On occasion, non-releasable animals may be placed in the permanent care of a permit holder in the scientific or zoological category, if there is an **educational** need for such animals.

Confiscated animals are likewise placed in scientific or educational facilities when at all possible.

Euthanasia

The Division, at its discretion, may request the assistance of another rehabilitator in evaluating the final disposition of non-releasable wildlife. The final disposition of non-releasable wildlife, shall be the sole responsibility of the Division.

Temporary Nature of Rehabilitation Permit

The rehabilitation permit does not allow you to permanently keep injured wildlife. Animals being rehabilitated must be maintained separately from other wildlife and may not be used for education programs or kept in a manner that may affect their ability to be release.

Rehabilitators possessing educational and scientific holding permits which allow the public to view wildlife at their facility must maintain the wildlife separately from any contact and view of animals being rehabilitated. Animals being rehabilitated for release may not be used for educational programs or maintained in any manner adversely affecting their ability to be released back into the wild.

Confiscation of Wildlife

Possession of a wildlife rehabilitation permit does not imply that the permit holder has any authority to enter a site or private property, to take into possession of, seize, or confiscate any animal held in possession by another without prior written permission by the owner or a direct request from the Division.

Revocation of Permit

Inappropriate handling of wildlife and/or violation of State or Federal regulations and policies related to maintaining your permit may result in re-evaluation or loss of your permit. If you are unclear about any policy or regulations pertaining to your permit, you should contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife, Office of Permit Management at (609) 292-2966 to discuss the matter.